assigned to all the service providers in their respective areas. Further requests for additional radio spectrum have been received from various cellular service providers and examined in accordance with policy guidelines in this regard. Additional spectrum has been coordinated and earmarked to M/s. Bharti Cellular Ltd., New Delhi, M/s. Hutchison Essar Telecom. Ltd., New Delhi, M/s. Hutchison Max Telecom Ltd., Mumbai and M/s. BPL Mobile Communication Ltd., Mumbai, after they have crossed subscriber base of 5 lakhs each in their respective service areas.

Telephone facilities in rural areas

1557. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) Government's policy for providing telephone facilities in rural areas;

(b) the position regarding availability of telephone facility in rural areas; and

(c) what has been private sector's response in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) The Government policy for providing telephone facilities in rural areas is:

(i) Strive to provide a balance between the provision of universal service to all uncovered areas, including rural areas.

(ii) Encourage development of telecom in rural areas making it more affordable by suitable tariff restructuring and making rural communication mandatory for all fixed service providers.

(iii) Increase teledensity to 3% by March 2007 and connecting all the rural exchanges in the country on reliable media by 2003.

(b) The status of rural telephony as on 31-12-2002 is given in the Statement (See below).

(c) Earlier the pace of development by private operator was slow. But now the Private Operator's progress has picked up and they have been asked to implement their obligation as per the license condition.

Statement

STATUS OF RURAL TELEPHONY

Status as on 31-12-2002	No. of rural Exchanges	5 Switching capacity (LAKH)	DELs(LAKH)
1.4.1998	18360	38.05	29.90
1.4.1999	19288	48.92	63.53
1.4.2000	21669	67.29	48.42
1.4.2001	24870	93.34	66.87
1.4.2002	26953	120.81	90.25
31.12.2002	27948	136.19	106.65

Internet Pornography

1558. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that internet pornograpy has all its bad impact on the Indian society particularly children and adolescents; and

(b) if so, what is the mechanism adopted to check and contain access to this malady?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) IT Act 2000 has provisions under Section 67 to punish anyone who publishes (in the electronic form) of any material which is lascivious or appeals to the prurient interests.

The Government is setting up an Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-IN). CERT-IN has been authorized to order blocking